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Letter dated 13 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Petra Declaration, adopted by the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, held in Petra, Jordan, from 10 to 12 May 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex issued as a document of the special session of the General Assembly on children, to be held in New York from 19 to 21 September 2001.

(*Signed*) Cristián **Maquieira**
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 August 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Petra Declaration

Statement of the Human Security Network to the special session of the General Assembly on children

We the members of the Human Security Network reaffirm our commitment to continue to work toward promoting the rights and protection of children affected by violence and armed conflict. We are committed to carry these vital human security issues forward into the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (19 - 21 September 2001).

Recognising the important outcomes of recent international conferences including the West African Conference on War-Affected Children in Ghana, the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Canada, the EU Seminar on Children affected by armed conflict and forced displacement in Sweden, and the Middle East and North Africa Regional Conference on the Use of Child Soldiers in Amman, as well as recent discussions and initiatives undertaken in support of war affected children at the UN Security Council.

Members of the Human Security Network underscore the importance of the rights-based approach in the Special Session on Children and are committed to an outcome rooted in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its four cross-cutting principles of non-discrimination; child survival and development; the best interests of the child; and child and youth participation.

Members of the Human Security Network highlight the importance of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and pledge to undertake all efforts to ensure early ratification and implementation, including setting the highest possible standards in relation to voluntary recruitment and the necessary safeguards and to work together as a community to promote the universal ratification of the Optional Protocol. In order to ensure the reduction of impunity against children being recruited and used in conflicts, the members of the Human Security Network also call for the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the ILO Convention 182 on the Prohibition and the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Recognising the importance of a comprehensive approach to the complex needs of war-affected children, particularly with regard to internally displaced and refugee children, members of the Human Security Network agree to work within the Special Session on Children to promote measures that address the following priorities for action:

- Provision, or restoration of access to educational and vocational opportunities for girls and boys and youth before, during and post-conflict;
- Promotion and provision of awareness and consciousness raising activities on children in war-affected areas;
- Promotion and facilitation of active participation of women and children in the decision-making process of peace building;
- Unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to children in complex emergencies, including psycho-social support, immunization campaigns and other services;

- Reduction of health problems exacerbated by armed conflict, in particular malnutrition, disease and the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- Effective disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of child combatants and reunification with their families and reintegration into their communities;
- Reduction of the devastating impact of small arms and landmines on children;
- Strengthening of mechanisms for monitoring and reporting of children's rights in situations of armed conflict, to increase accountability and to end impunity for those who violate the rights of children.

Members of the Human Security Network also recognise the importance of follow up to the Declaration and the Agenda for Action against commercial sexual exploitation of children, as adopted by the First World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation held in August 1996, and to the Second World Congress to be held in December 2001.

We, therefore, welcome the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and we underscore the importance of early access to medical, psycho-social and other support services for children who are, or have been victims to sexual exploitation and effective actions to combat the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.